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73. The apparatus of claim 68, wherein said laser processing apparatus further comprises a sample holder and said sample holder includes a heater for heating said substrate.--

REMARKS

The Office Action of February 6, 1996 was received and carefully reviewed. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's interview of May 16, 1996. In response to the Office Action and as provided during the interview, claims 8, 12, 16 and 17 are amended herein and claims 26-73 are added. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the currently pending rejections are respectfully requested. Claims 8, 11-13, 15-20 and 23-73 are currently pending in the instant application.

Claims 8, 11-13, 15-20 and 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over Begin et al., in view of Miyachi et al., Nakayama et al., and Kawasaki et al., further in view of Codama. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons advanced below.

Claims 8 and 16 are amended herein to recite a portion of the limitations of claims 12 and 17, respectively, which recited that the laser processing apparatus includes a rectangular-shaped laser beam having an elongated cross-section introduced into the chamber of the laser processing apparatus. Support for this language is provided on page 5, lines 1-5. Since these features were already present in a pending claim, this amendment should not introduce any new issues requiring an additional search after final rejection.

The use a rectangular-shaped laser beam having an elongated cross-section is advantageous over the cited art because it permits controlled irradiation of the surface of the film so that the entire film receives the

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same amount of irradiation. Combining the use of the rectangular-shaped laser beam with a multi-chamber processing apparatus greatly enhances the ability to mass produce semiconductors.

Claim 12 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over Begin et al., in view of Miyachi et al., Nakayama et al. and Kawasaki et al., further in view of Codama, as applied to claim 8, and further in view of Yamazaki et al. (4,888,305). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons advanced above with respect to amended claim 8.

New claims 26-73, as discussed during the May 16, 1996 interview, are substantially the same as claims 8 and 16, respectively, but also include additional features to further distinguish the present invention over the cited art. Specifically, claims 26-49 are similar to claim 8 and claims 50-73 are similar to claim 16, repeating the features recited in claims 26-49. There are four (4) basic additional features included in the newly added independent claims, namely, substantially square substrate (claims 26; 50) supported on page 4 (bottom of page) of the specification; substantially square substrate with laser beam wider than substrate (claims 32; 56) supported on pages 4 and 5 (Figure 2) of the specification; irradiation of the whole surface of the substrate by the rectangular-shaped laser beam (claims 38; 62) supported on page 7, lines 16-17 of the specification; and the presence of a gas inlet and outlet in the laser irradiation chamber in combination with the rectangular-shaped laser beam (claims 44; 68) supported on page 4, lines 1-7 of the specification.

The remaining dependent claims are identical for each of the independent claims. For example, claim 27 recites that the substrate is glass, as provided on page 2 of the specification; claim 28 expressly defines the dimensions of the substrate and the rectangular-shaped laser beam (page

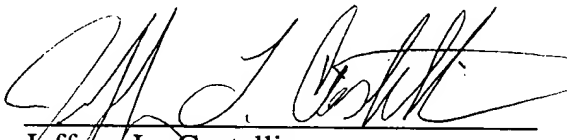
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4, bottom line and page 5, lines 1-2); claim 29 recites the additional apparatus for forming a thin film transistor (Example 3); claim 30 recites the laser processing apparatus includes a sample holder for moving the substrate in a direction orthogonal to the rectangular-shaped laser beam (page 9, lines 22-23); and claim 31 recites that the sample holder includes a heater (page 9, line 23). These features further distinguish the present invention over the prior art.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of record be reconsidered and withdrawn, that claims 8, 11-13, 15-20 and 23-25 be considered allowable, that new claims 26-73 be considered allowable and that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner believes that a conference would expedite that prosecution of the instant application, she is hereby invited to telephone counsel to arrange such a conference.

Respectfully submitted,



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